



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PROJECT: Malibu Lagoon Restoration and Enhancement Plan

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is the Lead Agency under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is considering the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified above. We would like to know your views as to the scope and content of the EIR.

PROJECT LOCATION

Malibu Lagoon is a 31-acre shallow water embayment located within Malibu Lagoon State Beach at the terminus of the Malibu Creek Watershed, the second largest watershed draining into Santa Monica Bay. The project is generally located at Pacific Coast Highway and Cross Creek Road in the city of Malibu.

BACKGROUND

Urban encroachment has significantly altered the physical configuration of Malibu Lagoon, which now occupies a much smaller portion of its historic area. A significant portion of the once low-lying tidally-influenced areas near the mouth of Malibu Creek were filled in the 1940s and 1950s, and by the late 1970s, this area was completely filled and developed with two baseball fields. Urbanization upstream in the Malibu Creek Watershed has increased the volume of water transported into the lagoon, and urban pollution has significantly diminished the quality of transported water through inputs of nutrients, sediments, and pollutants. Despite restoration efforts over the last two decades, the ecosystem of Malibu Lagoon remains degraded. Recent studies identified impacts to the ecological health and water quality in the lower creek and lagoon ecosystems.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Malibu Lagoon Restoration and Enhancement Plan (Plan) presents a comprehensive and adaptive management approach to restore and enhance the ecological structure and function of Malibu Lagoon, as well as to enhance visitors' experience through improvements to access and interpretation. The objective of the Plan is to restore the biological and physical functions of the lagoon to improve lagoon and coastal water quality, including management of water, habitat and access, while minimizing impacts to the existing system. The restoration goals for the lagoon consist of increased tidal flushing, improved water circulation, improved coastal water quality, increased holding capacity, reduced predator encroachment, restoration of typical salt marsh hydrology, increased wildlife habitat, creation of a nesting island for least terns and western snowy plovers, creation of channel connections to the lagoon, and integration of public access with habitat protection. Major components of the Plan consist of a relocated parking lot and staging area, implementation of Best Management Practices to minimize impacts of storm water runoff, slope improvements to the western edge of the lagoon, improvements to the existing boat house channel and the creation of a new channel along the southern edge of the west lagoon. A comprehensive monitoring plan will be implemented throughout the project to ensure that Plan objectives are met and adverse impacts are avoided.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Potential environmental effects are anticipated in the following categories: Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Construction Effects. An Initial Study was not prepared for this project, as preliminary review of the project scope indicated the necessity to prepare an EIR. Therefore, all other topics included in the CEQA Initial Study Checklist will be analyzed in the Draft EIR.

HOW TO COMMENT

Due to time limits mandated by state law, response to this NOP must be received within 30 days of publication of this notice. The public comment period begins October 28, 2005 and extends through November 30, 2005. Please send written responses to:

Suzanne Goode

California Department of Recreation and Parks
1925 Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, California, 91302

A public scoping meeting will be held on November 16, 2005 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Malibu City Hall located at 23815 Stuart Ranch Road, Malibu California.

The Draft EIR is scheduled for availability in December 2005. When completed, a notice will be published to alert the public of the availability of the Draft EIR and indicate where copies are available for review and how to comment.